

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (Previously Presented) An assembly for an animal milking apparatus comprising a vessel having at least one spigot (3) extending therefrom; a tube (1) through which fluid can pass, the tube (1) being elastic in the axial and radial sense;

characterized in that:

the apparatus further included a sleeve (2) of rigid material having substantially the same inner diameter as the outer diameter of the spigot (3); the spigot (3) being axially received in a neck of the tube (1), and the sleeve (9) being located concentrically between the spigot (3) and the tube (1) so that the sleeve (9) is slidable axially on the spigot (3) and at least a portion of the tube (1) extending from the neck is separated from the outside of the spigot (3) by the sleeve (9).

2. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein a- part of the sleeve (9) projects from the tube (1).

3. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 2, wherein said part of the sleeve (9) has a projecting flange (10,25).

4. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 3, having a collar (19) extending from the flange (25), the collar (19) extending circumferentially around the sleeve (9) and around the tube (1) so that at least the neck of the tube (1) is enclosed by the collar (19)

5. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 4, wherein the collar (19) is cylindrical.

6. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 4 ~~or claim 5~~, wherein the flange (25) extends obliquely from the sleeve (9), and the end (21) of the neck of the tube (1) is tapered to conform to the flange (25) .

7. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the end part (16) of the sleeve (9) axially furthest into the tube (1) is chamfered.

8. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the end part (16) of the sleeve (9) axially furthest into the tube (1) is inclined towards the axis of the sleeve (9).

9. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the sleeve (9) has at least one slit (17) therein.

10. An assembly according to claim 7, wherein the at least one slit (17) extends from the end (18) of the sleeve (9) axially furthest into the tube (1).

11. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the tube (1) has a bore (14) at one end thereof into which the sleeve (9) is received, which bore (14) is wider than the rest of the tube.

12. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 11, wherein the axial length of the bore (14) is less than the axial length of the sleeve (1) .

13. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the tube (1) is provided with formations which interlock with corresponding formations on the sleeve (9).

14. (Currently Amended) A method of assembling an assembly for an animal milking apparatus, the assembly comprising a vessel having at least one spigot (3) extending therefrom; a tube (1) through which fluid can pass, the tube (1) being elastic in the axial and radial sense; characterized in that:

the apparatus further included a sleeve (2) of rigid material having substantially the same inner diameter as the outer diameter of the spigot (3); the spigot (3) being axially received in a neck of the tube (1), and the sleeve (9) being located concentrically between the spigot (3) and the tube (1) so that the sleeve (9) is slidable axially on the spigot (3) and at least a portion of the tube (1) extending from the neck is separated from the outside of the spigot (3) by the sleeve (9), the method comprising:

inserting the spigot (3) into the sleeve (9) of rigid material, and inserting the sleeve (9) and ~~spigot~~ spigot (3) into the neck of the tube (1); or

inserting the sleeve (9) of rigid material into the neck of the tube (1) and inserting the spigot (3) into the sleeve (9); such that at least a portion of the tube (1) extending from the neck is separated from the spigot (3) by the sleeve (9).

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